REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-20 were rejected. All of the claims are believed to be patentable for the reasons summarized below. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims are requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The office action summarizes claims 1-20 as rejected under 35. U.S.C. § 103(a). Independent claims 1 and 9 were both rejected under 35. U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,515,266 issued to Meyer. The remaining claims were rejected on the same basis, or on the basis of Meyer in view of other references. All of the claims are believed to be patentable for the reasons summarized below.

The office action summarizes claim 1 to be amended by the previous response. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 9 was also amended by the previous response and therefore requests the Examiner to enter the amendment if not already entered.

1. The independent claims specifically recite a "service outage" as a triggering event for updating part status data.

Claim 1 recites a method for tracking part histories for a set of serialized parts. The method includes computer executable code on a computer readable medium. The method includes providing a database of part status data, *noting when a service outage* affecting one or more of said parts occurs and for each part in said database, entering the part status *at the end of said outage* into said database.

Claim 9 recites a method for tracking part histories for a set of serialized parts used in one or more gas turbine engines. The method includes computer executable

code on a computer readable medium. The method includes providing a database of part status data, *noting an engine outage* date associated with a service outage of one or more of said engines and for each part in said database, entering the part status *at the end of said outage* into said database.

Applicant submits that the invention uses a timing procedure for recording part status data as recited in the specification (Detailed Description, Paragraph 16). The timing procedure based upon service outages at a particular power plant site, or other machine or system minimizes the stipulation of event dates and thereby simplifies compilations of site or system history to outage dates only.

In certain mechanical systems, for example in gas turbines, the only time that parts can be removed and replaced is when the machine is not running, i.e., during a service outage. Further, to avoid use of multiple times or dates for each single service event (shutdown, part removal, part replacement, engine restart), a single date is selected to cover the dating for all events associated with a particular service outage. The date chosen in this process is the date that the machine is shut down for service so that the parts can be removed from operation and the part status is recorded at the end of such service outage. Thus, where part status simply cannot be assessed, the invention provides a useful technique for recording the status.

Importantly, the invention also allows for recording part status, even for parts that are not replaced or serviced. While conventiomal approaches typically note status of only those parts that are replaced, if at all, the method claimed is not so limited. The use of outages as a trigger for recordal of status data for all parts of interest represents a significant advance over such conventional approaches.

2. Meyer does not suggest using a "service outage" as a triggering event for updating part status data, and does not otherwise support the rejection.

The Examiner argued that Meyer discloses that spare parts are required at preset times for corresponding repair of the disclosed machine system. The Examiner cited the passages at col. 7, lines 1-7 and col. 9, lines 36-43 in support of the rejection.

The first passage reads:

> The application consists of the modules of FIG. 5, as well as an additional file 40, which includes, for example, "repair support" functions and is subordinated to the maintenance module. File 40 contains, e.g., repair instructions and details concerning the availability of necessary spare parts as well as, possible preset times for the corresponding service. Such details are available for planning the necessary works.

The second cited passage reads:

> For this purpose the file "repair support" is at its disposal. The connection of this file via an interface to the spare part ordering system is the logical consequence. It is this support of the expert system "maintenance" with a file for spare part availability and the preset times for services that enable a reasonable planning ahead of staff and material.

The Examiner also suggested that Meyer discloses that the planned outages are planned in advance at particular preset times, citing a passage of Meyer at col. 1, lines 25-30. The cited passage reads:

> This DOS system deals with the acquisition of data that can be comprised in a file and can be analyzed statistically in order to improve planning in connection with maintenance work. According to this DOS this file is to be put together from data that are collected by the maintenance team during maintenance work.

The cited passages from Meyer do not support the Examiner's position, however. Meyer does not, in these passages or when considered as a whole, fairly suggest entering of the part status data at the end of a service outage. As can be seen from the cited passages, Meyer teaches using possible *preset times* for service of parts to enable planning in connection with maintenance work. Further, the acquisition of data is comprised in a file that is collected by the maintenance team during maintenance work. Considered as a while, the Meyer teachings provide no particular direction as to *when* to collect part information. One skilled in the art would glean only that the data could be collected either during normal operation of the system or at regularly scheduled times. At noted above, such approaches are simply not appropriate for certain systems and parts that are inaccessible until an actual outage, whether prescheduled or not.

In response to arguments advanced by Applicant in previous filing the Examiner characterizes Applicant's argument as that there is no suggestion to combine references. However, the Applicant's position is that the reference is entirely lacking the elements of the claimed invention. As can be seen from the passages cited above, Meyer does not teach or even suggest entering the part status at the end of outage into a database. Moreover, the Meyer reference does not even recite noting of a service outage affecting one or more parts as set forth in claims 1 and 9.

Absent any teaching regarding the recitations of claim 1 and 9 regarding noting of a service outage and entering the part status at the end of service outage, Meyer simply cannot support a *prima facie* case of anticipation. Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 9 are allowable and respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider rejection of the claim.

With regard to dependent claims 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 14-16, 18 and 19, these claims depend directly or indirectly from allowable claims 1and 9, and are therefore considered to be allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from an allowable base claim. Further, because claims 3, 12, 13, 5,17, 8, 10 and 20 depend from allowable independent claims 1 and 9 these claims are also patentably distinguishable over Meyer. Applicant respectfully submits that Horikiri, Steele, Lawrence and Hughes do nothing to obviate the deficiencies of Meyer discussed above, and that all dependent claims now pending are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the remarks and amendments set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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John M. Rariden
Reg. No. 54,388
FLETCHER YODER
P.O. Box 692289
Houston, TX 77269-2289
(281) 970-4545